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THE EMMAUS DISCIPLES AND THE PURPOSES OF LUKE

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It is worthy of note that in the Gospel of Luke the witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus are very distinctly set forth as a larger company than the two or three women, and the Eleven, known to Matthew and Mark. The women who receive at the tomb the first news that the Master is risen are defined (23:55) as "the women which had come with him out of Galilee," a palpable reference to 8:2 f., where are mentioned Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others." So (24:10) the women at the grave are Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary of James, "and the other women with them"; a numerous company is intended.

But the group that receives the women's witness is also a larger one than the Eleven cited by the other synoptists. "They told all these things to the eleven, *and to all the rest*" (24:9). Two of "the rest," not of the Eleven, start for Emmaus in 24:13. Returning later with their news of a vision of the risen Master, they "found the eleven gathered together, *and them that were with them*," and to this larger group the Master presently appeared, thus vouchsafing to the two from Emmaus a second appearance within a few hours (24:33 ff.).

That this enlargement of the circle of primitive witnesses has pragmatic value for the author we may call Luke, whoever he may have been, that it reflects an interest which he strongly feels, is obvious. These things were not done in a corner, he will say; the original witnesses were many, the original skeptics, whom only reiterated evidence finally convinced, were a numerous company, not limited to the personal disciples, whom affection or enthusiasm might delude.

From the point of view of this interest may be examined the Emmaus episode, the most perplexing and obscure of all the incidents of

the resurrection narrative. An episode to which there is not the faintest allusion elsewhere in the New Testament, it is here recounted with a literary grace and charm which appeal to every reader. We can but agree with Brandt that here we see "the genius of Luke in his best hours."¹

For Luke the incident is clearly of the very greatest importance; it occupies one-half of his entire resurrection-narrative (chap. 24), and is recounted at far greater length than any other incident of the period, with far greater minuteness and emphasis of detail. The two men whose experience is here related must, then, have a peculiar significance for Luke.

They are, however, not men we have met before, or shall meet again. Only one is named; of their personalities or their histories, either prior to this incident or subsequently, we learn nothing. Despite the fact that the fullest revelation of the risen One is theirs, that to them alone, save to Peter, is granted a double "appearance," they do not appear in the Book of Acts among the witnesses of the resurrection.

Clearly they are of significance, not in their specific persons, but as *representatives*. They are the representative members of the larger circle referred to in vss. 9 and 33.

Now, this larger company does not appear here for the first time in Luke's pages; it was already present in Galilee. To it belong the mysterious Seventy (10:1), who appear and disappear so abruptly, whose number is the number of the nations, who are not called "apostles," and yet are "sent out" precisely as the Twelve are, with the same commission. Such a larger group, indeed, "companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John," says Peter in Acts 1:21. The "us" of this utterance includes the company present, about a hundred and twenty "brothers," two of whom are named, Joseph (Justus) and Matthias (vss. 15, 23).

These men, too, are qualified to become "witnesses with us of his resurrection," and any one of the number, as the lot might fall, might be "numbered with the eleven apostles" (vss. 22, 26). They must, therefore, have seen appearances of the risen Master, must

¹ *Die Evangelische Geschichte*, 365.

have heard his teachings, accompanying with the Eleven "unto the day that he was received up from us" (vs. 22; Luke 24:33, 50 f.). So, too, on the day of Pentecost, the members of this larger group share in the outpouring of the Spirit, and its manifestations (2:1-4).

This larger group, alongside the Twelve, is representative, for Luke, of the men who made the world-church to which he belongs. That church was not the creation of the Twelve, but of others, more numerous, a few of whom, only, Luke can name when he recounts acts. The Palestinian church created by the Twelve (Eleven) is not the world-church: it is rapidly fading from Luke's horizon. There must be a true apostolic succession from the risen Master to Luke's church. There must be another company of witnesses, whose authority and connection with the events are as unquestioned as those of the Twelve. They must see Jesus risen, and receive instruction from his lips.

This they do in the persons of Cleopas and his companion, who establish and transmit to the world-church living connection with the living Head, *not mediated through the Twelve*. Here is an "appearance" earlier in time, indeed, than that to the Eleven, more extended, more kindly, more intimate.

The story as it stands is Luke's creation; he has no written source for it, and no oral tradition of its details. He constructs a narrative in order to present in complete and intelligible fashion an important truth of the church's life:

And behold two of them on that very day were going to a village distant sixty stadia from Jerusalem, whose name was Emmaus, and they were conversing with one another concerning all these happenings. And it happened, as they conversed and discussed, Jesus himself, approaching, was going along with them. And their eyes were held not to recognize him.

Here is a point in which Luke has a special interest, the lack of belief at the manifestation of the risen Jesus (cf. vss. 11, 37, 41). It must be emphasized, for apologetic reasons, yet it must be explained, and the explanation here is precisely what it is, for example, in 9:45; the divine action prevents their perception, a characteristic Lukan motive.

And he said to them: What are these words which you exchange with one another in walking? And they came to a halt, with gloomy faces. And one of

them, by name Cleopas,² said unto him: Art thou the only one sojourning in Jerusalem and not acquainted with what has taken place in it in these days? And he said to them: What? And they said to him: The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who became a prophet powerful in work and word in the sight of God and all the people; how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to the condemnation of death, and crucified him.

This is one of the many passages in which Luke declares directly that the Jews killed Jesus; the necessities of controversy have led him to make this point too prominent, and to view Pilate in too friendly a light, but the essential fact remains. The whole narrative of the trial and passion Luke has re-written from this point of view,³ but Mark makes the point equally clear: "But we were hoping that he was the one who was to ransom Israel. But furthermore, with all this, it is now the third day since these things took place." Here the two men are remembering the predictions of Jesus' resurrection, which they ought, at this point, to quote; the allusion is unintelligible to a stranger, without explanation. "But also certain women of our company amazed us, having been at dawn to the grave"—we miss an antecedent reference to the burial, nor is it intimated whether ὁρθριναί signifies "today at dawn," "or "yesterday"—"and not having found the body, they came saying that also they had seen a vision of angels, who affirmed him to be alive. And some of those with us went off to the tomb and found it to be as the women said, but him they did not see." Here again we miss the antecedent account to which this last item refers, and the omission is indeed strange, but not so strange as the failure of any antecedent for the ὥφθη Σίμωνι of vs. 34. It has, indeed, been suggested that vss. 22-24 are an interpolation, like vs. 12, on the basis of the Johanne story.⁴ It cannot be denied that the σκυθρωποί would be more

² This is a pure Greek name, the short form of Κλεόπατρος, and, as such, has significance for Luke; it has nothing to do with the Aramaic Klopas of John 19:25. So Holtzmann and Plummer, against Zahn, *et al.* What Brandt, *Evangelische Geschichte*, 379, suggests as to the symbolic value of this name is nonsense. Less so, Pfeiderer, *Urchristentum*, 2d ed., 1902, I, 468.

³ This is the standing phraseology of Acts, e. g., 2:23, 36; 3:13 f., 17; 4:10 f.; 5:30; 7:51-53, etc.

⁴ Wellhausen, on Luke 24:34 f.; J. Weiss, *Schriften des N. T.*, I, 483, would excise vs. 24 only. For the omission of vs. 12 the MSS evidence is decisive. Cf. the note by Westcott-Hort, in *Notes on Select Readings*, and Tischendorf *ad. loc.* The

in place if the complaint ended with vs. 21, and that the following rebuke would be more natural. But there is no MS authority for omitting the verses, and vs. 22, in particular, has every internal indication of genuineness. Vs. 13 plainly implies that the two men were of the company that heard the women's report.

"And he said unto them: O unintelligent and slow in heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke. Was it not necessary that Messiah suffer these things and enter into his glory?" A defense of the passion lies in these words, but no allusion to the resurrection, save as "enter into his glory" is a general expression for the passage from death into the heavenly life. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Here is the guarantee that the gospel of the founders of the great church is authentic and true to the Scriptures in which it was foretold, despite every Jewish-Christian claim to the contrary. Here is a boast kindred to Paul's, "I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11 f.). So the Emmaus disciples get their gospel and its Scriptural basis directly from the risen Lord himself, and not through any mediation of "the Twelve." That claim could have been made, surely was made, by many besides Paul; by the five hundred brethren, by some part of "all the apostles." Luke here makes it for all these men in the person of Cleopas and his companion: "And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he made as though to go farther. And they urged him, saying: Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and already the day has declined.⁵ And he entered in to stay with them." Luke evidently here thinks of the two men as at home in Emmaus, and this as their house; yet in vs. 30 Jesus appears as the house master. "And it came to pass, when he had reclined with them, taking the bread, he blessed, and having broken, he was

verse is rejected by Wellhausen, B. Weiss, Holtzmann, Schmiedel, Arnold Meyer, Lake, and many others. Defended by Keim, Brandt, Merx.

⁵ There is a possible influence here of the phraseology of Judg. 19:8 f. So Brandt, *op. cit.* p. 365.

distributing to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he vanished from them."

Here the supernatural influence by which their eyes had been holden (vs. 16) is removed, and they know who has been their teacher and illuminator. It is implied that the two would have known Jesus had not the spell been laid upon their eyes, that is, that they had personal acquaintance with him before his death (Acts 1:21 f.). The way in which the spell was loosed is extremely significant. It was the *κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου* which brought recognition. Luke may or may not reflect here that these men, though not present at the last supper, had frequently seen Jesus break bread at common meals with his followers (Luke 9:16). Probably he did not so reflect. He is intent on saying something much less prosaic. Not only had Jesus walked and talked with these two men, and taught them the deeper things concerning himself; he had celebrated with them the Eucharist, the dearest sacrament of the church.

The "breaking of bread" (vs. 35) became practically a technical term for the Lord's Supper, and is so used by Luke again in Acts 2:42, as is the phrase *κλᾶν (τὸν) ἄρτον* in 2:46; 20:7, 11; cf. I Cor. 10:16. It is notable that the verb *κλάω* is not used in the New Testament except in reference to the bread of the Eucharist;⁶ the nouns *κλάσμα* (used only of the fragments remaining after the multitude in the desert was fed), and *κλάσις* (only in Luke 24:35 and Acts 2:42) have the same limitation of usage as their verb.

For the Christians of Luke's time, it was precisely in the mystery of the Supper that believers drew closest to their Master and found his most intimate presence revealed. Then, as at no other time, did they perceive and apprehend his very bodily presence. Better than all visions, a privilege which put them on an equality with those who had companied with the Master in the flesh, the Supper was the very opening of their inward eyes, the revealing to their spirits of the object of their adoring love. And this revelation, most intimate, most deep, most tender, Cleopas and the other had experienced. No higher, truer revelation could come to any believer, any apostle, than this. The Lord had both taught them of his truth, and min-

⁶ The language of Mark 8:6 ff., plainly shows the *ἀγάπη* as the model for this wonder-story, and Acts 27:35 *consciously* reproduces the same eucharistic language.

istered to them of his sacred presence. So the great builder of the world-church cries, "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? . . . Are they ministers of Christ? . . . I more! . . . I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." But the humblest member of that church may reply, "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" If to the founders he had appeared in vision, to every believer he was known in the breaking of the bread. The consciousness of the church that on these two means of revelation of the glorified Master her life was founded and is perpetually renewed and continued, Luke brings to exquisite expression in the story of Emmaus.

"And they said one to the other: Was not our heart heavy within us as he was talking to us on the road, as he opened to us the Scriptures?" The reading "heavy" is to be preferred here to the usual "burning," though *καιομένη* has the better attestation in the Greek MSS. The Syriac (Sinaitic and Curetonian), supported by the Sahidic and (in substance) the Armenian, has "heavy," the Syriac words for "heavy" and for "burning" differing only in the position of a dot. So also the Aramaic ܝܩܝܪ *yaqir*, "heavy," differs only slightly from ܝܩܝܕ *yaqid*, "burning." The confusion, i. e., arose in an Aramaic or Syriac version, not in the Greek text. Yet the Greek text has not wholly escaped it. Codex Bezae has *κεκαλυμμένη co-ōfertum*, and old-Latin MSS have *excaecatūm*, *optusum*, *exterminatum*, "blinded," "dulled," "made senseless." The Syriac influence on the Western Text offers still an unsettled question, and the interrelations of readings here are difficult to unravel.⁷ But the internal evidence is conclusive for some word meaning "heavy" or "dull," probably either *βραδεία* or *βαρεία*. The process by which almost all our Greek MSS came to offer *καιομένη* cannot be traced here; perhaps it cannot be traced at all. But the reference is plainly to vs. 25, and the Master's reproach, "O slow of heart to believe" (*βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεῦειν*), a reproach which the two men are here simply repeating. "Oh, how stupid we were, not to understand that it was He," that is the clear and evident sense.

⁷ Cf. Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort's note *ad. loc.*, Wellhausen, Plummer, and especially Merx, *ad. loc.*, also the *Translation of the Four Gospels from the Syriac of the Sinaitic Palimpsest*, by Agnes Smith Lewis, 1896, *ad. loc.*

"Our heart burning within us" would indicate some premonition or suggestion of the truth, which is quite opposed to the context; they heard his words of instruction concerning Messiah and the way of entrance into his glory, they understood his meaning, but not once did it occur to them: this is He. They ask him to remain with them, as an act of hospitality, never dreaming they are entertaining Messiah unawares. He is not in any degree known to them until "the breaking of the bread." Their eyes were holden that they should not know him" over the entire period covered by vss. 15-31, until "their eyes were opened." How natural their self-reproachful repetition of the Master's rebuke: "O fools and slow of heart!" Luke elsewhere has the phraseology: "the heart made heavy," "dull." Cf. 21:34, *μήποτε βαρυνθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι ὑμῶν*.

Here is, in brief, another statement of that slowness to believe in the resurrection and messianic exaltation of Jesus which is one of Luke's strongest apologetic motives. There was some strange stupor over their senses, as there had been at the great crises of the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden (Luke 9:32; 22:45 f.), when they were weighed down with sleep. And this torpor of their understandings had not been mere stupidity on their part; it had been a supernatural influence, a part of the divine plan for assuring to the world beyond all shadow of doubt that Jesus had been "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection of the dead." So in 9:45 the plain declaration of Messiah's passion "was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it," so their eyes are holden and their hearts are slow, so the resurrection message is to them but the senseless raving of half-mad women.

Especially important for Luke, and for all other early Christian apologists, was the explanation of the fact that with the Old Testament and all its rich messianic prophecy before them, Jesus' earliest followers had not seen in him the fulfilment of the promise. How clear it was to the apologists, e. g., to Matthew, that even the most trivial details of Jesus' experience fitted perfectly the prophetic picture! They had ceased to be conscious that it was only *after* he had been "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," that the process of adjustment between his career and the Scriptures began. Not that any coincidence between

what he did and the prophecies suggested his messiahship, but his messiahship once established on other grounds, the prophecies, of course, *must conform*. It was the resurrection which opened to them the Scriptures, and beginning from Moses and all the prophets, interpreted the things concerning him, their Lord and Christ. Of this fact no one of the evangelists was fully conscious, yet it shines through their narratives at more than one point.

For example, in Mark 9:9, after the chosen three disciples have beheld Jesus transfigured in celestial glory, with Moses and Elijah, the Master charges them "that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of Man should have risen from the dead." We may be sure that this injunction was obeyed. Very significantly the parallel in Luke (9:32) represents the disciples as "weighed down with sleep" at this great moment; so is explained their lack of entire comprehension. In many passages the same motive comes to expression: John 20:9 has it in clear wording, "As yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead." In 20:20-23 (=Luke 24:41-49) they come to know it.

"And arising that very hour they returned to Jerusalem"—apparently they had intended to remain in Emmaus, i. e., they were not members of the Jerusalem group—"and found assembled the eleven and those with them"—note the constant presence of the larger group to receive this third witness of the resurrection—"saying: Truly the Master arose and appeared to Simon."

The abrupt and unrelated insertion of the latter statement into this context has always been a point of criticism for the commentators. Here is a bit of the primitive tradition of "appearances" of the Master in glory, indeed, of the first and most important appearance, and yet it gets but the scantest notice, as a second-hand report, with no word of description. The explanation is not far to seek. The only "appearance" to disciples of which tradition has given Luke any *description* is that to the "Eleven." The first intercourse with the risen Lord which he describes, the one which he gives at greatest length, with the greatest care, with most evidence of personal interest, is that which the Emmaus disciples, outside the circle of the Twelve, enjoy. Yet the tradition gave him the bare fact that the first appearance was to Peter. Peter, too, is one of Luke's

heroes; he, as well as Paul and the others, helps to carry the gospel out of Judaism into the world. Luke has no interest whatever in suppressing the appearance to Peter, but he knows nothing to say about it. He can preserve its chronological priority only by having the Eleven announce it to the Two, before the latter make their report. If we ask when, where, under what circumstances the appearance came, Luke knows no more than do we. He had to insert the statement at this point, and had absolutely no details; the awkwardness and abruptness which critics find in the phraseology are only natural. Though one almost inevitably supposes that Luke must have related at some length the appearance to the pillar apostle Simon Peter, he does not do so, and that simply because he cannot. Vs. 34 indicates not only the measure of his immediate personal concern in Peter and the "outside disciples," respectively, but also the measure of his knowledge of the experiences which gave them, respectively, their call and consecration to the apostolic ministry. Of Peter he repeats two traditional words; of the others he writes twenty-three verses.

The Emmaus narrative is not a record of historical happenings; it is Luke's construction. But what it expresses is historical fact, viz., that others besides the Twelve had visions of the risen Master, that the Christian movement which eventuated in the world-church of the second century did not go out altogether, or chiefly, from the twelve disciples.

Acts makes that important fact clear, but we do not commonly date early enough the participation of this larger group in the work. We vaguely think of it as beginning with Paul's conversion, some five years after Jesus' death. That is largely due to Luke's own presentation, in the earlier chapters of Acts, for Luke, though he is very sure of the fact, lacks definite data for its demonstration. We must carry back this wider sphere of apostolic activity into the time immediately after Jesus' death, as Luke correctly, if vaguely, does. The matter needs more attention than it has had, and would repay careful study. Might we not hope, for example, for some light on the foundation of the church at Rome, and some explanation of the fact that this church needs, in the year 59, a detailed justification of the freedom of Christianity from Judaism?

At any rate, we are not without more definitely historical data than Luke offers. Paul's allusion to "Andronicus and Junias my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, *who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me*" (Rom. 16:7), may give food for thought.

Here are two men, distinguished (*ἐπισήμοι*) among the company of apostles, who are absolutely unknown except for this casual allusion, and yet whose Christian life and activity began prior to Paul's.⁸ How many other such must there not have been! The list of names in Rom., chap. 16, suggests many questions; what, e. g., of those four other kinsmen of Paul, Herodion and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater? At any rate, one cannot help being reminded of another definite statement of Paul's, "then he appeared to all the apostles" (I Cor. 15:7).

Paul cites the appearances to Peter and to the Twelve from the primitive *κήρυγμα*, and then adds appearances to many outside this traditional group, appearances which lie entirely outside the gospel accounts, except that of Luke. So to five hundred men at one time, this very early, succeeding the appearance to the Twelve, and preceding that to Jesus' own brother James. What must these five hundred and more men not have done for the spread of the new faith! James sees Jesus and becomes an apostle; then, in turn, all the apostles are called by the heavenly vision to their work. These do not include the Twelve, but are a distinct and multifold larger number. The list really begins with James, and ends with Paul himself; both of whom are apostles, but only as are Junias and Andronicus and all the rest.

After Peter and the Twelve and the Five Hundred have seen the Lord, in other words—and that means very shortly after Jesus' death—begins a series of "appearances" to a great number of men, beginning with James, a series that had not entirely ceased when Paul was writing, to James, to all the apostles, to me. The *ἐφάπαξ* significantly fails with *τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν*, and must not be supplied in thought, as is commonly done. Rather, "as often as a man was called to missionary service, it was done by means of a

⁸ E. Rignbach, *Die Auferstehung Jesu*, 2d ed., 1908, p. 9, suggests that these two men may have been among the Five Hundred.

Christophany.”⁹ Only so could one be an apostle, “numbered with the eleven apostles,” which means “to become a witness with us of the resurrection” (Acts 1:22). The apostolic call is almost synonymous with a seeing of the Master; “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” (I Cor. 9:1). Each of the long list of apostles must make the same claim. “Then to all the apostles,” says Paul. Luke in the Emmaus story simply gives us the beginning and the typical expression of this greater and more prolonged revelation. Origen correctly understands the relation of Luke’s presentation to Paul’s brief list, when he cites the substance of Paul’s words, “and subsequently he appeared to all the other apostles besides (*παρά*, “alongside”) the Twelve, *perhaps to the Seventy*.”¹⁰

⁹ E. von Dobschütz, *Ostern und Pfingsten*, 1903, p. 35.

¹⁰ *Contra Celsum*, II:65.